

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Sultanate of Oman

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION



سلطنة عُمان

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STATEMENT BY

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of the Sultanate of Oman
and**

**Head of the Omani Delegation to the Sixty-first Session
of the United Nations General Assembly**

**22 September 2006
New York**

**** A shortened version will be delivered ****

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Your Excellency Sheikah Haya Al Khalifa,

It gives me great pleasure to extend my warmest congratulations to you and your brotherly country, the Kingdom of Bahrain, on the assumption of the presidency of the Sixty-First Session of the United Nations' General Assembly. I am fully confident that your vast experience will steer the work of this august assembly to a successful conclusion.

Let me pay tribute to your predecessor, Jan Eliasson, for the ideal manner with which he conducted the work of the previous session.

I would also like to praise the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his efforts to equip this organization with the appropriate tools to properly respond to world events and challenges.

Madame President,

This session is held amidst important and difficult circumstances. Despite the successes achieved by the United Nations in establishing the Human Rights Council, the Peace-Building Committee as well as the Emergency Fund, however, there remain numerous challenges ahead.

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories remains very tense as a result of Israel's activities of killing, terrorizing, collective punishments, demolition of homes and other practice that runs counter to the lofty objectives of the Peace Process. There are requirements that have to be considered for peace to take place between Israel and the Palestinians.

Hence, we support the Arab League's call to refer the entire Arab-Israeli conflict to the United Nations' Security Council in order to find a lasting and a comprehensive peaceful settlement. It is a call that affirms the Arab States keenness on and their adherence to peace as a strategic option and a basis for peaceful coexistence between the Arab countries and the State of Israel.

Madame President

The world has recently witnessed the tragedy of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and all the resulting destruction of killing women and children. We affirm our support to the brotherly Lebanese people in this crisis. We also welcome the Security Council resolution 1701 and we hope that it will enhance security and stability in the region.

The positive response to the U.N. Secretary General's call for a greater participation and engagement in the enhanced United Nations Interim Force

in Lebanon (UNIFIL) is clear indication to the support the International Community accords to Lebanon.

My country is deeply concerned at the deteriorating security situation and the internal violence inside Iraq. We call upon all the Iraqi parties to give precedence to the national interest and to support their National Government in accordance with a conciliatory political agenda that looks after the interests of all sects of Iraqi people.

We welcome the conclusion of the Abuja Peace- Agreement between the Sudanese Government and the opposition groups and hope that it will stop further bloodshed among the brotherly Sudanese people. We look forward to seeing a positive and effective Security Council role in Sudan in cooperation with the Sudanese Government.

Madame President

Despite the fact that the African Continent enjoys natural and human resources, it still suffers from conflicts, spread of diseases and poverty.

While we support the efforts of the African governments to overcome these difficulties, we call upon the International Community to spare no effort towards helping the African countries to confront these difficulties.

Madame President

In the area of development in the Sultanate of Oman, it can be clearly noted that since the start of the blessed renaissance led by his Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, may God save him, the Sultanate has realized that development may entail environmental problems in case there was abuse of the available natural resources, in addition to the pollution caused by modern technologies and means of production, which could have a devastating effect on the environment and all its biological components. Based on this, the Sultanate has made sure that its endeavors in the field of economic and social development should be coupled with continuous care of the environment. This has been done through paying attention to environmental protection considerations during the planning and implementation of development projects. As a result, the Sultanate has adopted a new planning approach based on the close linking of development and the health of the environment and the protection of natural resources in order to achieve sustainable development.

In confirmation of this principle, the Sultanate formulated a national strategy for the protection of the environment that determines the main objectives and plans that tie development and environment and integrates environmental considerations in all phases of planning; consolidate these

pillars as basic approaches to development and integrating them in different administrative, institutional, political and legal frameworks.

On the other hand, the long term development strategy which embodies the economic vision for the Sultanate through the year 2020, and the five year development plans adopted by the Sultanate since 1975, aimed at the establishment and crystallization of basic principles for an environmentally sound development and protection of natural resources.

Moreover, the Sultanate of Oman fully observes the basic principles adopted by the international community and included in regional and international environmental conventions aimed at the achievement of sustainable development. That is why the Sultanate has signed or acceded to many agreements and laid down the national plans to implement them. These include, but are not limited to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Montreal Protocol, the Vienna Convention, the Basel Convention, the Stockholm Convention, the Rotterdam Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Cartagena protocol for Biological safety and the Kyoto Protocol attached to Climate Change Convention and other environmental protocols and agreements.

We are confident that this session will accord great importance to the questions relevant to this issue. We, in the Sultanate of Oman, with the great interest of his majesty Sultan Qaboos and his enlightened continued instructions, and in coordination with the United Nations and the international community, make concerted efforts to protect our environment and our territorial waters from pollution and endeavor to protect our natural resources to prevent their deterioration or extinction.

Madame President

There is a total accord among all people that globalization has positive aspects. However, it is noticed that in some cases it could damage the interests of several developing countries. On this basis, my country supports the call for the establishment of a global non-discriminatory and multiple-track trade system that seeks to achieve balanced outcomes of Doha Round resolutions. It is our hope that the current negotiations on multilateral trade issues especially those related to agriculture and services would achieve success in a way that would guarantee equality in looking after interests and rights of all states.

We look forward to seeing a positive role of the international, financial, economic and trade institutions in bridging the growth gap between developed and developing countries. We urge these institutions to provide

support to developing countries to help them overcome the obstacle of getting investment funds and to allow free access of their exports to global markets without any restrictions or protectionist measures. In this regard, we support the request of the brotherly State of Qatar to host the International Conference on Development in 2007.

In this respect, the Sultanate would like to pay tribute to the great efforts made by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and other world economic forums to meet the challenges facing developing countries, notably sustainable development, economic stability and financial equilibrium. We hope that international economic and financial institutions, will continue their co-ordination and integration of their activities in the fields of trade and investment, dealing with problems of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, disease and the deterioration of the environment, in addition to providing all sorts of technical monetary assistance and assistance in kind, in order to enhance the chances of success in facing these challenges.

Madame President

Economic performance in the Sultanate has witnessed an accelerated development in 2005. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP), in current prices, increased to about 11 billions and 817 million Omani Rials, compared to about 9 billion and 527 million Omani Rials in 2004, thus realizing a 24% rate of growth. This strong growth of the Omani economy was the result of rising oil prices, strong local demand, improved investment climate, and increased foreign demand on non-oil products. All principal activities, specially in non-oil sectors, have contributed with various degrees, in the growth of the national economy in 2005.

The Sultanate started this year, the implementation of the 7th five year plan (2006-2010) which aims at the achievement of a rate of growth of at least 3% annually on average, in addition to enhancing the competitiveness of the national economy, improve productivity, increase investment rates, accelerate privatization, economic diversification, the development of human resources, continued implementation of the strategy of Oman's digital society, and the movement towards an economy based on knowledge.

Madame President,

The Sultanate plays a positive and effective role in regional and international economic cooperation. It works to enhance and develop areas

of joint activities through the Customs Union of the Arab Countries of the Gulf, the Greater Arab Free Trade Zone, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in whose work the Sultanate participates positively and effectively. In addition to that, the Sultanate, has signed with the United States of America a free trade Agreement, on January 19, 2006 in Washington. This Agreement is an important step towards the liberation of trade, and opening the door for larger investment opportunities.

Moreover, the Sultanate has signed together with the States members of the Gulf Co-operation Council, a number of framework agreements for economic, trade and investment co-operation with the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Turkey and the Latin American Common Market member countries. These framework agreements provide for the conduct of negotiations to establish free trade areas between the states members of the Gulf Co-operation Council and these countries and groups. It is also worth mentioning that negotiations between the states members of the Council and the European Union have reached their final stages, Also the Sultanate is one of the founding members of the Association of the States overlooking the Indian Ocean for regional co-operation and is a party to several projects and agreements among members of the Association.

The Sultanate has also joined the Asian Co-operation Dialogue in 2003. Since then, it plays an important role in the meetings, symposia and workshops held in the States members of that dialogue. The Sultanate also participates in the side meetings held at the margins of international conferences and meetings, in which members of the dialogue participate. The Sultanate has adopted the Road Safety Project.

The Sultanate hopes that the on-going multilateral trade negotiations, specially in the fields of agriculture and services, would yield fruit and satisfactory results that could serve the interests of all member states. This would enhance the climate for the liberalization of trade and economy and help establish a world economy characterized by sustainable development, balance and co-operation in a manner that would benefit both developing and developed countries, in a world that enjoys stability, peace, security and prosperity.

Madame President,

Throughout its march, the Sultanate has sought to promote social work in the country, in response to the instructions of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, may God save him, to keep abreast of social and economic life in the Sultanate. The name of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour and Vocational Training has been changed to the Ministry of Social

Development. This reflects a qualitative shift in administrative social work that embodies the development ideas and approaches that could guarantee the realization of the objectives of sustainable social development.

The Sultanate has accelerated programs for economic and social growth to help establish a human and social climate supportive of improving the quality of life and enhancing the effectiveness of the institutions of the social sector, making use of human resources, spreading awareness of social problems and their repercussions, supporting volunteer work and developing volunteer work programs in addition to expanding the participation of the public in promoting rehabilitation services and welfare programs serving various social groups.

Since the family is the focus of the programs and activities of social welfare services, the government offers these services to certain categories of society to help advance them and make use of the abilities of their members in the 2005 great achievements that should be added to its record of development achievements.

The government, through its system of social security, pays monthly subsidies to save individuals and families, orphans, disabled, the elderly, divorcees, and families of prisoners and others whose situation is difficult as a result of having nobody who can provide for them. Since the start of this program in 1973 up till now, it has not remained static but has developed in accordance with social change, in order to be able to provide care for this category of society. This reflects the interest of the builder of this blessed renaissance, may God save him, in his children on Oman's good soil.

The interest of the father and leader in his children has extended to wherever they live, thus social welfare now covers citizens living in sisterly and friendly countries who are eligible to receive the benefits of the social security law. The number of such beneficiaries has reached 153 through the end of 2005. Embassies and Consulates perform the required social background checks and regularly follow their cases.

On the occasion of celebrating the glorious thirty fifth national day last year (2005), His Majesty Sultan Qaboos has graciously added a new noble deed to his many such deeds by allocating 16.000 lots of land for building houses or commercial and residential buildings to families benefiting from social security in various areas of the Sultanate. These were granted on the basis of specific criteria to eligible families. This was added to the other privileges provided to this category of people such as receiving a financial gift to be added to the value of the subsidy they receive on both Eid -ul Fitr